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Implementation of the recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

Information received from Governments

Russian Federation**

Information from the Russian Federation on nationwide measures to implement the Forum's recommendations in connection with the request from the secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Points 1-4 of the questionnaire

Issues relating to the protection of the rights and interests of indigenous peoples are given priority by the Government of the Russian Federation.

The category of indigenous minorities in the Russian Federation includes 45 ethnic groups totalling about 280,000 persons. This group of peoples includes 40 indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East, totalling about 244,000 persons. The indigenous minorities are clustered in communities in more than 30 constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

Because the traditional lifestyle of each of these minorities is vulnerable, systematic Government action to preserve their culture and traditional lifestyle is a matter of pressing concern.

In the Russian Federation, past experience of cooperation between industrial concerns and indigenous minorities is being analysed and compensatory and other measures are being strengthened at the federal level in the form of appropriate regulations and legislation. In order to develop a strategy for interaction between

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** The submission of the present document was delayed in order to include the most recent information.

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representatives of indigenous minorities and industrial concerns operating on the territory where those minorities live, it was decided to establish a working group on the subject within the Russian Ministry of Regional Development consisting of representatives of the federal and regional executive authorities, community organizations of indigenous minorities and business enterprises. Work is now being done on the introduction of a method for assessing the harm caused to such minorities by industrial development of the territories where they pursue a traditional livelihood.

In accordance with existing legislation, a number of social welfare measures, particularly medical care, are provided to the Russian Federation's indigenous minorities. For example, in accordance with article 8, paragraph 9, of Federal Act No. 82 of 30 April 1999 on guarantees of the rights of the indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation, all such minorities receive free medical care, including a compulsory annual check-up at State and municipal health-care facilities under the programme of State guarantees concerning the provision of free medical care to citizens of the Russian Federation.

The focus of State policy for the North is to improve the demographic situation and to reduce death rates, particularly among children and those of working age, by establishing a system of medical services able to treat all population groups by means of preclinical diagnosis and methods of correcting and preventing pathological conditions.

In order for all these measures to succeed, it will be necessary to have adequate scientific backup, to continue research on the epidemiology of communicable and non-communicable diseases among the indigenous population of the North, to study the effectiveness of the existing health-care system, to design and introduce new arrangements for the delivery of medical care and to seek new ways and means of protecting and rehabilitating the environment.

Significant support to residents of the northern regions of the country and to the indigenous national groupings as regards quality and accessibility of medical care is provided under the priority national health-care project, under which measures are being taken to protect public health by:

- Developing the preventive side of medical care (preventive examinations, check-ups, vaccinations, etc.);
- Providing better resources and equipment for front-line health care, ambulance services and maternity services;
- Resolving personnel issues and increasing financial incentives for medical workers in the provision of quality medical care;
- Ensuring that medical care uses the latest technology.

For the northern territories, which are experiencing an unfavourable demographic situation, it is extremely important to include in the priority national health-care project measures to reduce mortality from preventable causes, diseases causing high mortality among the population and occupational diseases.

The goal of the priority national health-care project is to lay the foundations and create the conditions for enhancing front-line health care and making it more

efficient, taking into account the social infrastructure existing in the regions, the settlement pattern and other characteristics.

In this connection, the Ministry of Health and Social Development issued Instruction No. 584 of 4 August 2006 on district-based arrangements for the organization of medical services to the population. This Instruction covers the Far North districts and comparable localities, mountainous, desert and arid districts and others with extreme climatic conditions and long periods of seasonal isolation, as well as sparsely populated localities, and takes into account their characteristics.

The prevalence of violence against women is a consequence of the low standard of living, unemployment and the prevalence of asocial phenomena such as drunkenness and alcoholism.

The system of social rehabilitation of victims of family violence is important in preventing such violence. Lead roles in this system are played by social welfare agencies and institutions of various kinds that provide practical, medical, psychological, educational and legal services that are important for families, children and women, offering assistance in difficult circumstances and helping to solve family and psychological problems. These institutions are operational in all the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. The most highly developed ones are the territorial family and child social aid centres, which provide various social services.

State financial assistance to families with children is a means of overcoming poverty and enabling women to combine their professional and family roles.

During 2006 and 2007, important legislation was adopted to improve financial support to citizens with children, and allowances for mothers and children are steadily increasing.

In accordance with Federal Act No. 207 of 5 December 2006 on the introduction of amendments to certain legislative instruments of the Russian Federation concerning State benefits for citizens with children, social benefits for families in connection with the birth and upbringing of a child were significantly increased. Since 1 January 2007, working mothers have received a monthly childcare allowance equivalent to 40 per cent of their wages. For the care of two or more children under the age of 18 months, allowances are cumulated. The cumulative amount of the allowance may not exceed 100 per cent of wages but may not be less than the cumulated minimum amount of the allowance.

This allowance is paid to the mother, father, other relative or guardian actually caring for the child who is on childcare leave and is subject to compulsory social insurance.

Entitlement to this allowance has been acquired by unemployed citizens who are actually caring for a child under the age of 18 months and are not subject to compulsory social insurance. Allowances of all types are paid to women regardless of their ethnicity.

Another factor expanding women's opportunities in the sphere of work and employment is the existence of a network of accessible and high-quality preschool institutions.

In order to broaden the coverage and accessibility of preschool institutions, a ceiling on the amount that parents pay for a child's place at such an institution has been re-established. For example, the parental payment may not exceed 20 per cent of the cost of the place or 10 per cent for parents with three or more children who are minors.

Since 2007, part of the amount actually paid by parents for a child's place at a preschool institution has been reimbursed: 20 per cent for the first child, 50 per cent for the second child and 70 per cent for the third child and subsequent children.

The programmes being adopted in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation to boost employment, reduce unemployment and develop small and family enterprises are an important step towards the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of gender and ethnicity. They focus particularly on measures to promote the employment of vulnerable categories of indigenous women.

The employment programmes cover assistance in finding suitable work and job placement by employment agencies, including free vocational guidance and psychological support, vocational training, retraining and refresher courses, and promotion of self-employment and small-scale entrepreneurship.

The employment promotion programmes also include support for traditional handicrafts, the development of work schedules suitable for women (shorter working day) and work from home.

The right of indigenous minorities in the Russian Federation to preserve and develop their native language, traditions and culture is set out in the Federal Acts on the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation and on ethnocultural autonomy. In particular, the Federal Act on the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation (No. 1807-I of 25 October 1991, as amended on 24 July 1998 and 11 December 2002) governs the system of regulations on the use of the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation in Russian territory.

In order to enhance the ethnocultural potential of all the peoples inhabiting the territory of the Russian Federation, there is a plan to create the conditions needed for comprehensive and equitable development of native languages and for freedom of choice and use of the language of communication. The Act emphasizes the protection of the sovereign linguistic rights of the individual, irrespective of his or her origin, social or property status, race or ethnicity, sex, education, attitude to religion or place of residence. In 2002, with a view to standardizing the alphabet of the official languages of the Russian Federation, an addition was made to the aforementioned Act (art. 3, para. 6) establishing that in the Russian Federation "the alphabets of the official language of the Russian Federation and the official languages of the republics shall be based on Cyrillic letters". A regulation is also being approved, in accordance with which "other alphabets for the official language of the Russian Federation and the official languages of the republics may be established by federal legislation".

On the basis of the sovereignty of the republics of the Russian Federation, the aforementioned Act also establishes their freedom to settle issues relating to the protection, development and use of their national languages. Special attention is paid to ensuring the free development of languages in areas with high concentrations of indigenous or ethnic minorities that do not have their own

administrative and territorial units set up along ethnic lines, as well as those living outside such areas.

The right to use one's native language in areas with large populations of ethnic minorities is provided for specifically in article 6, paragraph 4, of Federal Act No. 8 of 25 January 2002 on the national population census and the Federal Act on basic safeguards of Russian citizens' electoral rights and right to take part in referendums, which allows the relevant electoral commission to decide to print ballot papers in Russian, as the official language of the Russian Federation, and in the official languages of the relevant republic of the Russian Federation, and where necessary in the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation in the territories where their populations are concentrated (art. 63, para. 10).

Federal Act No. 3612-I of 9 October 1992, on the foundations of Russian Federation legislation on culture, as amended on 23 June 1999, 27 December 2000, 30 December 2001, 24 December 2002, 23 December 2003, 22 August 2004 and 8 January 2007, establishes the right of peoples and other ethnic communities "to preserve and develop their cultural and ethnic identity and to protect, restore and preserve their native cultural and historical habitat" (art. 20). It contains a specific provision that "policy with regard to the preservation, establishment and dissemination of the cultural values of indigenous ethnic groups, the names of which are used for the corresponding administrative units, shall not be prejudicial to the cultures of other peoples or ethnic communities living in the territories in question" (art. 20).

The Russian Federation's national education policy is designed to establish optimal conditions for the ethnic, social and cultural development of Russian citizens, including its indigenous peoples.

In this connection, the Russian Ministry of Education and Science issued an instruction in 2006 approving the framework national education policy of the Russian Federation and the plan for the implementation of national education policy priorities in the general education system in the context of modernization for the period 2004-2010.

With a view to implementing the framework national education policy, the Ministry of Education and Science, in conjunction with the Federal Institute of Educational Development and the academic and educational community, is carrying out a number of projects relating to the protection and expansion of the rights of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation:

- The ethnolinguistic situation in educational institutions is monitored on a yearly basis;
- Methodological assistance is provided for the development and implementation in general and vocational education institutions of variable models for fostering a culture of inter-ethnic dialogue;
- Bilingual cultural education programmes with an ethnocultural component have been developed and are being implemented in general and vocational educational institutions;
- Undergraduate, postgraduate and supplementary education programmes have been developed and are being implemented in order to provide training in

ethnocultural education, including for representatives of ethnic and indigenous minorities;

– In conjunction with other ministries and agencies, a package of measures is being implemented for the observance of the second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People to support the work of autonomous ethnic cultural organizations and other ethnic voluntary associations relating to the preservation of ethnic identity and the development of ethnic language and culture.

Under special federal programmes for 2006-2010 coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science, in particular the "Russian Language 2006-2010" programme, a number of projects in this area were implemented in 2006 and 2007:

– Changes to the method of teaching Russian as a second language were developed using one of the indigenous languages as a model;

– Proposals were drawn up to increase the effectiveness of the work of educational institutions implementing bilingual general education programmes;

– An analytical review was prepared on the quality of textbooks for teaching Russian as a second language to students in educational institutions in one of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation where the language of instruction is a native language other than Russian or Russian as a second language; in addition, a linguistic and cultural approach to the teaching of Russian as a second language in general-education schools was elaborated;

– A set of teaching materials on methods of teaching Russian as a second language was prepared for students at teacher-training institutions;

– On the basis of experience in the Russian Federation and in other countries, a modern method of teaching Russian in bilingual kindergartens and groups was developed and approved.

Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science participate in the work of the inter-agency working group on the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Point 5 of the questionnaire

A system of specialized laws and regulations has been established in the Russian Federation to protect the rights of the indigenous population. Since the adoption of the Russian Constitution in 1993, these vulnerable ethnic groups have been officially designated as "ethnic minorities" (art. 71 (c) and art. 72, para. 1 (b), of the Constitution), "minority ethnic communities" (art. 72, para. 1 (l)) and "indigenous minorities" (art. 69).

Specifically, the Constitution links the regulation and protection of the rights of "indigenous minorities" and "minority ethnic communities" with rights to land and other natural resources regarded as "the basis of the life and activity of the peoples inhabiting the territory in question" (art. 9, para. 1) and with the right to protection of their native habitat and traditional way of life.

In accordance with Federal Act No. 82 of 30 April 1999 on guarantees of the rights of the indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation, indigenous minorities

are defined as peoples living on their ancestors' traditional territories, preserving a traditional lifestyle and livelihood, who number fewer than 50,000 in the Russian Federation and who consider themselves autonomous ethnic communities.

Federal Act No. 104 of 20 July 2000 on general principles for the organization of communities of indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East introduced the new designation "indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East". The designation was further defined to reflect the special legal situation of these peoples.

Government Decision No. 255 of 24 March 2000 on the unified list of indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation and Government Order No. 536 of 17 April 2006 approving the list of indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East specify the composition of the indigenous minority population of the Russian Federation.

Pursuant to Government Order No. 185 of 21 February 2005, the Ministry of Regional Development is preparing regulatory documentation on the establishment of territories of traditional natural resource use for the indigenous minorities of the North. In accordance with Federal Act No. 49 of 7 May 2001 on the territories of traditional natural resource use for the indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East, such territories are one type of specially protected natural territory.

The Act serves as a framework, and its implementation will require the development of Government regulations creating a mechanism for the establishment and functioning of such territories.

Draft regulations on the "Bikin" model federal territory of traditional natural resource use for indigenous minorities (Primorsky Territory) have been prepared.

The special-programme method of providing State support to the indigenous minorities of the North is one of the mechanisms used for establishing the conditions for their sustainable economic and social development. It is implemented through the special federal programme "Economic and Social Development of Indigenous Minorities of the North up to the year 2008".

The programme's basic objective is to establish conditions enabling indigenous peoples to achieve sustainable development based on principles of self-sufficiency through comprehensive development of traditional economic practices and the related resource and production base, through spiritual and ethnocultural development, and by raising the level of education, vocational training and health care of indigenous peoples.

The programme provides for the creation of the necessary economic and legal conditions for supporting traditional economic practices, transporting the products to market and organizing trade and bartering. The programme is being implemented in 29 constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

Similar regional programmes have been adopted and are being implemented in a number of constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

In 2006 the Ministry of Regional Development was able to double the funding for the special federal programme "Economic and Social Development of

Indigenous Minorities of the North up to the year 2008" (from 103 million roubles in 2005 to 205.6 million roubles in 2006).

Spending under the programme for 2007-2008 will amount to 207.2 million roubles annually.

The Ministry of Regional Development is working on a new special federal programme, "Economic and Social Development of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East up to the year 2015", to be launched in 2009. The total funding for the programme will be 9,844,000,000 roubles, including 4.5 billion roubles from the federal budget, 4,975,000,000 roubles from the budgets of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and 369,000,000 roubles from extrabudgetary sources.

The strategic objectives with regard to protection of the rights of indigenous minorities are as follows:

1. Enhancement of the regulatory framework for the rights of the indigenous minorities of the North, including:

- Development and approval of a framework policy for the sustainable development of the indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East;

- Development of a strategy for interaction between representatives of the indigenous minorities of the North and industrial concerns operating on the territory where those minorities live;

- Drafting and approval of model regulations on federal territories of traditional natural resource use for indigenous minorities;

2. Enhancement of the mechanisms for State support for the socio-economic development of the indigenous minorities of the North, including the drafting of a framework for the new programme "Economic and Social Development of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East up to the year 2015";

3. Substantial reinforcement of measures to support the traditional culture and languages of indigenous minorities.

These strategic objectives are included in the package of priority measures for the observance in the Russian Federation of the second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

Point 6 of the questionnaire

In order to ensure the meaningful ethnocultural development of the peoples of the Russian Federation and resolve issues relating to inter-ethnic cooperation and partnership with religious organizations, the Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation was established in September 2004 and given responsibility for policy on ethnic issues.

The Ministry is empowered to devise national policy and to draft laws and regulations relating to the socio-economic development of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, federal-ethnic relations and protection of the rights of ethnic

minorities and the native habitats and traditional lifestyles of indigenous minorities and ethnic communities.

The Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations is the lead department of the Ministry of Regional Development responsible for policy on ethnic issues. The Director of the Department is Aleksandr Vladimirovich Zhuravsky (tel. 980-25-47, ext. 24000).

Point 7 of the questionnaire

Specialized advanced training programmes on the rights of indigenous peoples are being developed for civil service staff. Administrative staff are currently improving their knowledge of issues relating to indigenous peoples while carrying out practical work to implement federal and regional programmes on safeguarding the rights and legitimate interests of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation.

Point 8 of the questionnaire

The second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, currently being observed under the auspices of the United Nations, demonstrates the special attention being paid by the international community to the unique cultures of such peoples.

The Russian Federation pays particular attention to international projects to protect the rights of indigenous peoples and was the first State to announce officially its participation in the second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. The Government order on the preparation and observance in the Russian Federation of the second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People was a key instrument in this respect.

The Ministry of Regional Development organized the elaboration of the package of priority measures for the preparation and observance in the Russian Federation of the second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. This package of measures covers the enhancement of the legal and regulatory basis for the protection of the rights of indigenous minorities; the development of effective economic mechanisms for preserving the traditional way of life of indigenous minorities; the improvement of education for indigenous minorities; the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage; and the development of traditional culture. Nationwide, international and interregional activities are planned.

The package of measures was approved by Government Order No. 1639 of 19 November 2007. Pursuant to this Order, funding for the package is allocated each year from the resources set aside for the Ministry of Development in the federal budget for 2008 and for the 2009-2010 planning period under the heading "Activities in the area of inter-ethnic relations" in the "Other nationwide issues" subsection of the "Nationwide issues" section in the functional classification of budgetary expenditure. This amounts to some 80 million roubles.

Point 9 of the questionnaire

Contemporary climate change, in particular the warming which has taken place in recent decades, is exerting a significant impact on the socio-economic situation in

the Arctic. Possible consequences of climate change for the indigenous peoples of the North are set out below.

Reindeer husbandry. Reindeer husbandry is an important activity for the indigenous peoples in this region. More frequent thaws are leading to the formation of a layer of ice on the ground, which restricts the northern deer's access to the lichen found under the ice. Frozen ground is found in most of the region and, if the permafrost layer is destroyed, the northern deer's traditional migration routes may be disrupted. The earlier melting and later freezing of river ice observed in recent years may create a breach in the traditional migration routes between winter and summer pastures. Future changes in the extent and condition of snow cover may have a serious negative impact on reindeer husbandry and the associated physical, social and cultural aspects of life for reindeer herders. The concern of the indigenous population of the Arctic is expressed particularly in the Yakutsk Declaration of the Third World Reindeer Herders' Congress (17-20 March 2005). It was noted that the current warming of the Arctic climate is much more rapid than previously expected and is already affecting reindeer herding. In the future, the warming of the Arctic will also have an impact on the region's rich resources, animal health and the economy of indigenous communities. The Congress encouraged States to take effective measures to adapt to climate change and to develop new strategies for the management of the Arctic, which should incorporate the traditional knowledge of reindeer herders.

Fisheries. The impact of climate change on fisheries in northern regions is difficult to forecast, since many factors besides the climate are involved, including fishery management practices, market demand and prices, and fishing methods.

Forest fires. Fires are a significant source of damage to the northern forest, exerting a long-term environmental impact. Forecast assessments of the conditions which lead to forest fires in Siberia show that an increase in air temperature in the summer season from 9.8° C to 15.3° C will result in a doubling of the number of summers in which severe fires occur, an increase of almost 150 per cent per year in the area affected by forest fires and a 10 per cent reduction in timber stocks.

Agriculture. The climate conditions that constrain agricultural development include the short growing season (insufficient time for the harvest to ripen fully or for the production of large yields of crops that are capable of ripening), insufficient warmth during the growing season, and long, cold winters, which limit the survival of perennial crops. According to forecasts, further warming will lead to increased agricultural opportunities.

Water resources. The transition to a more humid climate will probably lead to an increase in water reserves for people living permanently in the region. In areas free of permafrost, the water table will probably rise nearer to the surface, and it is predicted that more water will be accessible for agricultural production. In the spring, increased precipitation and run-off are likely to raise river levels and increase the risk of floods. According to forecasts, lower water levels will be seen in the summer period, which is likely to have a negative impact on river navigation and hydropower and increase the risk of forest fires.

Public health. It has been established that climate and heliogeophysical conditions have a significant impact on the rate of disease, since most of the indigenous population is sensitive to weather conditions, and the changes observed

in the climate are causing an increase in weather-related complaints, even among healthy individuals. When assessing the impact of climate on the human body, great importance is attached to studying weather variability in atmospheric processes. Most dangerous to the human body are sudden changes in basic weather characteristics (air temperature and humidity, atmospheric pressure and precipitation, wind speed and solar radiation), which become noticeably more frequent when the climate warms. There is evidence that many diseases are aggravated when sudden changes in meteorological parameters occur.

In the past decade there has been a marked increase in the incidence of all the main classes of disease among young people, children and adults in the Russian Arctic. Circulatory diseases are the most common primary cause of disability retirement and mortality among the working-age population of the Far North. Extreme climatic conditions are conducive to the progressive development of cardiovascular disease. As a result, the peak age for the incidence of and mortality from acute heart attacks is 15 years younger in the North than in the central part of the country. Stress and the continental climate with extremes of temperature and atmospheric pressure are the major causes of vascular disease in the Far North. In addition, increased doses of ultraviolet radiation due to the depletion of the ozone layer may lead to a higher incidence of cataracts and an increased risk of skin cancer.

Climate change will continue to affect human health in the Arctic. The impact will vary from one place to another because of regional differences in climate change and also because of variations in the health and adaptive capacity of different ethnic groups. The rural inhabitants of the Arctic, who live in small, isolated communities with an inadequate social support system, weak infrastructure and a deficient or non-existent public health-care system, are the most vulnerable. Communities whose existence depends on hunting and fishing, particularly if they hunt or fish only a small number of species, are vulnerable to changes that have a heavy impact on those species (for example, the retreat of sea ice and its impact on the ringed seal and the polar bear). Age, lifestyle, gender, access to resources and other factors influence the individual and collective capacity to adapt. The historical capacity to resettle, as a means of adapting to changing climate conditions, has diminished because the population has switched to a sedentary lifestyle.

Climate change has both positive and negative effects on human health in the Arctic. Direct positive effects may include a reduction in conditions caused by the cold, such as frostbite and hypothermia, and a reduction in cold stress. Mortality rates are higher in winter than in summer, and milder conditions in the winter season in some regions may reduce the number of deaths during the winter months. However, the correlation between the higher number of deaths and winter weather conditions is difficult to interpret; it is more complex than the association between illness and death related to high temperatures. For example, many deaths in winter are caused by respiratory infections such as influenza, and it is unclear how higher winter temperatures might affect the prevalence of influenza.

Direct negative effects will probably include an increase in heat stress and in the number of casualties associated with unusual weather conditions. Indirect effects include the impact on diet caused by changes in the availability and usability of food sources, an increase in psychological and social stress linked with environmental and lifestyle changes, potential changes in the speed of development

of bacteria and viruses, epidemics caused by insect invasions, changes in access to good-quality drinking water, and diseases caused by problems in the sanitation system. Interactions between pollutants, ultraviolet radiation and climate change may also have an impact on health. Indigenous peoples in some regions of the North report cases of stress linked with extremely high temperatures that are unprecedented. The effects include breathing difficulties, which may in turn restrict an individual's participation in physical activity. However, observations confirm that the reduction in the number of cold days associated with warming in many regions during the winter has a positive effect, allowing people to spend more time outdoors in winter and relieving the stress associated with extreme cold.

Wildlife changes linked to the climate will probably hamper the availability and usability of traditional food resources, which will have a significant impact on health. As is well known, the switch to a Western diet is increasing the risk of cancer, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease among the northern population. The decline in commercially important species such as salmon is likely to create economic difficulties and health problems because of the drop in income in small communities. The climate burden and the movement of animal populations are also conducive to the spread among animals of infectious diseases, which may be passed on to humans.

Safe drinking water and an adequate sanitation system are critically important for human health. The sanitation infrastructure includes water treatment and distribution systems, wastewater collection systems, treatment plants and drainage facilities, and systems for the collection and disposal of solid waste. The thawing of permafrost, coastal erosion and other climate-related changes that have a negative impact on the quality of drinking water hamper the effective delivery of water or cause direct damage to service facilities and are likely to have a negative impact on human health.

The increase in the number of extreme events such as floods, storms, landslides and avalanches can be expected to lead to a higher incidence of injury and death. Climate change in the Arctic is also likely to have an impact on mental health. The decline in the possibility of hunting for food, fishing, reindeer husbandry and gathering will probably result in psychological stress because of the loss of important cultural activities. Floods, erosion and the thawing of permafrost associated with climate change may have a negative impact on the environment and infrastructure in the villages and may lead to migrations and the destruction of communities, with the resulting psychological impact.

The States of the Arctic region must therefore plan steps to adapt the socio-economic situation to climate change. To this end, State support for climate change research is necessary and factors associated with the changing climate must be taken into account in the development of sustainable development programmes in the Arctic region.

Without proper scientific support, production capacity in the Arctic may suffer irretrievable losses instead of being strengthened. Basic and applied research in the region is fundamentally important for the study of global processes on the Earth and also for the rational and environmentally safe use of natural resources in the Arctic.

The most topical areas of climate change research in the Arctic region, which require State support, are the following:

1. Monitoring of manifestations of global climate change in the Arctic region, primarily in the Arctic marine environment, including:

- Regular collection of the necessary volume of primary scientific data on the Arctic marine environment using expeditionary methods involving observations on scientific expedition vessels and drifting Arctic ice;
- Wide use of remote means of data collection using modern automated methods for collation, transmission, processing and presentation, and the establishment of databases;
- The provision of up-to-date technical equipment for expeditions for the purpose of observing the marine environment;
- The establishment of integrated data analysis systems, including data and knowledge bases and software for the assessment of climate change and the natural environment;

2. The implementation of large-scale scientific projects, including:

- Research on the Arctic's role in global climate processes and natural and climatic changes, as influenced by natural and man-made factors;
- Development and application of global and regional climate models for assessing possible changes;
- Research on heliocosmic effects on the natural environment and climate of the Arctic (the ozone layer, ultraviolet radiation, magnetic storms, stratospheric circulation);
- Research on the impact of the natural environment on human activity and commercial facilities;
- Research on magnetospheric and ionospheric effects on major pipelines, electricity transmission lines and communication systems.

It is necessary to fill the most significant gaps in data and knowledge regarding the impact of global, regional and local climate change on the socio-economic situation in the Arctic:

- Consolidate and evaluate knowledge regarding natural climate variability, man-made climate change and the impact of global, regional and local climate change and ultraviolet radiation on the Arctic environment;
- Analyse the accumulated knowledge of the indigenous peoples of the North regarding the environment and environmental fluctuations in Arctic regions;
- Research the nature of extreme events linked with climate change that pose a risk to humans and to the socio-economic situation, on the basis of monitoring, research, scientific experiments and modelling;
- Develop new methods of assessing risks and management strategies in the context of current climate change that impacts both on industrial and social infrastructure and on public health;
- Conduct comprehensive research in order to assess more effectively the long-term impact of climate change on the inhabitants of the Arctic, taking into account the socio-economic effects.

Active international cooperation is needed with regard to research on manifestations of global climate and environmental problems in the Arctic region, including:

- Participation in major international climate projects implemented as part of the World Climate Research Programme under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organization, such as the "Climate and Cryosphere" (CliC) project;
- Participation in research as part of the International Polar Year 2007-2008;
- Participation in bilateral and multilateral projects for research on changes in the Arctic marine environment and their impact on the global climate, with expeditionary research in the Arctic Basin and the Greenland and Norwegian Seas;
- Provision of state-of-the-art instruments, equipment and a fleet for national expeditions;
- Development of a system for monitoring the environment and pollution.

Scientific support for measures to preserve Arctic biodiversity encompasses the following objectives, the achievement of which requires coordination with climate research:

- Maintenance of natural development processes in natural ecosystems;
- Monitoring and regulation to ensure that the use of land and marine areas does not exceed the ecological capacity of the ecosystems. In this regard, attention should be focused primarily on the preservation and rehabilitation of the abiotic environment;
- Establishment of specially protected natural territories with various protection regimes;
- Conservation and restoration of biotopes;
- Reconstruction (restoration) of natural ecosystems;
- Maintenance of traditional economic activities;
- Designing of ecosystems.

In order to develop a package of measures for adaptation to climate change in the Arctic, it is necessary:

- To increase the amount of socio-economic research on issues relating to the impact of and adaptation to climate change, including detailed research on problems relating to sustainable development;
- To incorporate the knowledge and experience of indigenous peoples into the body of scientific knowledge and, to expand the partnership between indigenous peoples, local communities and scientists in organizing and conducting research and monitoring with regard to climate change in the Arctic;
- To establish a system of education and training in order to develop the population's capacity to adapt to climate change;

- To develop a system for monitoring public health in the Far North in connection with climate change and to develop ways of adapting to such change (including the development of a telemedicine system for Arctic regions which would make it possible, in particular, to monitor and assess the harm caused to the health of Arctic inhabitants by climate change);

- To develop a package of measures to ensure the environmental safety of infrastructure facilities located in and projected for the Arctic, including compulsory climate assessment of projects;

- To establish a system for the provision of reliable information to local administrations and various organizations for the elaboration of sound management decisions in the context of climate change;

- To elaborate management decisions aimed at ensuring that regional economic activities are adjusted to climate change, protecting the well-being of the indigenous peoples and minorities of the North, and preserving biodiversity in the Arctic.

Priority attention should be focused on groups of species and ecosystems which are generally under threat or which are of key importance for the preservation of national and global biodiversity. Coordinated measures are required, both nationwide and at the international level, in order to preserve or restore these groups of species and ecosystems.

There has recently been a new emphasis on the study of migratory species in connection with the problem of avian influenza. One of the priority areas of research involves the study of possible changes in migration routes in the context of a changing climate, in connection with the threat of the spread of avian influenza.

The Arctic is identified as a separate entity in State policy because of the Russian Federation's special national interests in the region and the region's specific characteristics. The aspects of climate change research currently of interest to the Russian Federation are closely linked both with the problem of manifestations of global climate change in the Arctic, described above, and with the range of national interests associated primarily with the exploitation of the Arctic's natural resources and the development of transport infrastructure. Sustainable development in the Arctic is a result of the interaction of three basic components: nature, people and production. Each component comprises hundreds of data indicators. Climate conditions in the Arctic are a constant natural factor reducing the overall stability of the system.

The factors holding back development in the Arctic regions include regional and global climate change and its impact on the permafrost area, the development of hazardous hydrometeorological, glacial and other natural processes, and the increased risk from and damage caused by these processes and man-made disasters.

The Russian Federation's biodiversity and biological resources form, to a significant extent, the basis of its economy and human environment. Aquatic organisms are an important biological resource and an element of the country's biodiversity. Fisheries and the exploitation of marine biological resources constitute one of the leading sectors of the Russian economy.

The strategy for the preservation of biodiversity is regarded as part of the general national trend towards sustainable development, taking into account the

cohesion of society, the economy and nature, and the need for sustainable national development that is as predictable as possible and precludes the destruction and degradation of the natural environment. On the basis of the specific features of the biosystems, any mechanisms developed to facilitate the country's transition to sustainable development must take into account, inter alia, the dynamic processes in ecosystems caused by climate change.

The increased vulnerability of the Arctic stemming from climate warming and the associated changes in natural systems is another argument for identifying the Arctic as a region requiring a special environmental management regime. Regional climate forecasts are required in order to establish a scientific basis for achieving most of the practical objectives of biodiversity conservation and the efficient management of living natural resources.

Sustainable development in the Arctic, the quality of the population's life and health, and national security can be secured only if climate change is taken into account in the planning and implementation of human activity in the polar regions.

To this end, it is necessary to formulate and consistently implement a uniform State policy for taking account of climate conditions, with the aim of preserving the climate system, adapting to new environmental conditions and using natural resources in a rational manner. The preservation and restoration of natural systems must be one of the State's and society's priorities.

Point 10 of the questionnaire

The Russian Government and Federal Assembly are currently analysing the international and domestic legal implications and the financial and economic implications of the practical implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, at the request of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested the translation service of the United Nations Secretariat to carry out a linguistic assessment of the text of the Declaration and a comparative analysis of the Russian and English versions.